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In the Heart of Virginia's Dark Tobacco Belt
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EDITORIAL OPINION

"ABLE LEARNERS" OFTEN NEGLECTED

A group of public school teachers in the Richmond area were on a panel to discuss school problems. Miss Velma Copeland, a Henrico County visiting teacher, is reported as having stated that frequently school teachers spend most of their time with "un-able" students and therefore the talented youngster gets lost in school channels.

It seems to us that Miss Copeland has brought up a timely topic that needs serious thought.

Not long ago we were discussing this same problem with a teacher. This teacher stated that there were several sections of the same subject and that in each section her work was made most difficult by the presence of "repeaters" and others just not interested or lacking skill for the course. She added that more talented students were "held back" by the "slow-down" process of trying to stir up interest among the less talented students.

We suggested that there was an obvious solution: put the "less able" students all in a section of the subject and the "able learners" in another section. This would enable the teacher to challenge the full talents of the 'able learners" and face the problems of the "less talented" with more realism.

The teacher agreed, but hastened to advise that school experts said it was "poor psychology" to segregate students by talent and skill.

The heck it is.

Is not life itself a "survival of the fit" and is there any way to keep nature from segregating the able from the less able? And does not the student, immediately when he leaves school, with or without a diploma, enter into stern competition for survival on a basis of fitness?

When a draftee goes into the armed service, he is given tests to ascertain his skill and talent, and so far as possible he is assigned according to skill and talent.

The young man or girl who secures a job in most any trade or vocation you can mention is immediately segregated according to skill and talent—and paid accordingly.

Why kid oneself in the classroom by practicing an unrealistic theory?

Mass education has resulted in a lowering of the curricula level in public schools. Where are the Latin scholars? Why do we soften courses to enable "less able learners" to set the standard, and neglect the skill and talent of the "able learners?"

It seems to us that the consolidation of schools, bringing about the necessity of multiple sections in many subjects, is the ideal opportunity to have a section for advanced students, one or more for average students and one for the slow learners. The advanced section could be listed as an 'incentive" or "opportunity" section for those planning to go to college or for any other reason were interested in taking a sterner course. The lower sections would be available for those interested merely in getting a general concept of the subject, with no idea of mastering its full possibilities. We see no reason for a student to get an "inferiority completx" merely because he prefers a shop course to taking four years of tough Latin or advanced chemistry or solid geometry.

Attention is being given to offering vocational coures in the public schools. We think it is a splendid program and completely worth while. We will see much more of it in the future. The expansion of such courses is a major objective.

But do not neglect to keep in the list of courses a challenge to meet the potentialities of all groups of students.

Vocational courses require as much talent and skill as any other. But it is a different sort of skill from that required in certain classical subjects, and each has its own sphere.

Where is our age to get the specialists our society requires, if our public schools neglect the "able learners?"

MORE OR SAME

It seems to us that the foregoing ties in with the following editorial from the Richmond News Leader:

Losing The Race For Brains

The United States may hold a lead on Soviet Russia in stockpiling atomic arms, but it is falling behind in the race to produce the brainpower that makes the weapons. Recent studies by Editorial Research Reports and the New York Times show a critical shortage of scientists, engineers, and technicians in America.

The United States now needs a minimum of 30,000 engineering graduates a year, but from 1950 to 1954 the number of engineers graduating from college in this country dropped from 50,000 to 20,000. Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, the number had risen to 54,000 in 1954 from a low of 11,000 in 1928.

Dr. John R. Dunning, atomic physicist and dean of the Columbia University of Engineering, says that Soviet technical schools seem to be equal in quality to those of this country. And to the extent that graduate degrees are a measure of scientific know-how, it is notable that Soviet universities are turning out three times as many Ph. D.'s in science and engineering as American unitversities are providing.

"We have almost lost the battle for scientific manpower," Dr. Dunning warns.

Underlying the present shortage of scientists in America are (1) the draft, (2) the low birth rate during the depression, (3) the war that cut off 150,000 bachelor degrees in science and 10,000 or more doctorates, (4) the opening of new fields in industry that demand technicians, and (5) the rapid expansion of expenditures for military research and development.

The root of the problems appears to lie in a drastic shortage of high school teachers equipped to interest students in science and to guide the most promising ones toward a career in that field. The number of college graduates preparing to teach high school science has fallen off since 1950 by more than 50 per cent.

The difficulty is that many teachers, or potential ones, are taking higher-paying jobs in government and industry in preference to the classroom. To make matters worse the decline in science teachers is setting in just as the rising tide of "war babies" will double enrollments in secondary schools and colleges.

There are some bright signs in the Virginia picture, however. The number of high school students enrolled in science courses has increased from 79,800 to 105,900 in the past three years, due in large part to the insistence of the State Department of Education on laboratory facilities in the new buildings. Further, the department is holding a four week workshop for public school teachers this summer to prepare a guide that will assist schools in their efforts to improve instruction in science in grades one through 12. The workshop will be followed by a conference of high school and college teachers of science, and out of it will come valuable advice on how Virginia can step up its pace in the race for brain-power.

One further suggestion may be in order: State and local funds for teacher salaries now are allocated without regard to the courses the instructor teaches. The man teaching physics and the woman teaching grammar fare alike. In our view renewed consideration should be given to the idea of meeting the demand for science teachers by increasing the pay of science teachers. It is not that we love the humanities less, but that the clear need for scientists must be met more effectively than we are meeting it now.

TRADE VICTORY IN THE HOUSE

(New York Herald Tribune)

The struggle in the House over the President's reciprocal trade bill was short, sharp and—so far as the Representatives are concerned—decisive. The measure finally passed by a vote of 295 to 110, a very healthy margin. But, before the last balloting, the bill had a number of extremely narrow escapes from being seriously watered down.

Tariff issues have always been sectional, rather than purely party matters (when Gen. Hancock ran for the Presidency on the Democratic ticket in 1880 he said: "The tariff question is a local question"). The dominant Southern agricultural interests traditionally faver lower tariffs, but there have always been divisions on the subject in both parties. It is significant of changes in the Southern economy that a number of Southern Democrats voted for restrictions on the Presidential power to make reciprocal trade agreements. In the same way the altered position of the United States in respect to world trade has been reflected in a Republican President's program for reducing tariff barriers and in its support by Republicans from industrial states.

The fact remains, however, that on the critical early votes there was a Republican majority for limiting the President's powers, and the bill was saved by Democratic votes. Congressional Republicans cannot afford to weaken their party by allowing this kind of legislative leadership to go to their opponents by default. President Eisenhower's program—along with his leadership—is the party's strongest asset. It is also a national need. The Senate would do well to take these points into account when the tariff measure comes up in that chamber, and every Republican in the national legislature should bear them in mind throughout the session.

"THERE OUGHTA BE A LAW"

(The Montgomery Advertiser)

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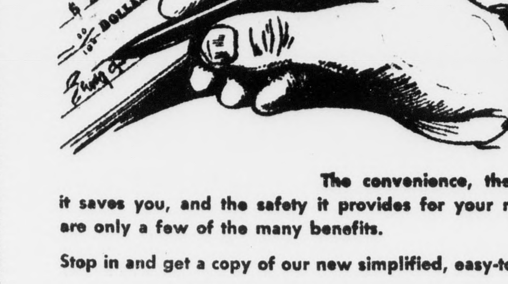

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VIRGINIA'S 10 MOST IMPORTANT INSECTS ARE NAMED BY VPI

Ten insects have won the dubious honor of being the "most important in Virginia."

They and their unsavory cohabitants of the insect world are credited with damages amounting to an estimated $15,031,000 to crops in Virginia last year. And without the control practices which were followed, they would have caused additional losses of some $4,523,000, says Arthur P. Morris, associate entomologist at VPI.

Morris has just compiled reports from agricultural workers throughout the state, and here is his list of the 10 most important insects: corn earworm, termite, house fly rice weevil, livce of domestic animals, southern corn rootworm, meadow spittlebug, hornworm, aphid and spider mite.

Evidence against them isn't hard to find. Principal crops injured by the earworm were corn, soybeans, peanuts and grain sorghum. In the southeastern counties, yield of soybeans dropped an estimated 4% because of the insect, and in the eastern counties the figure was 10 to 15% loss on late-maturing soybeans.

Termite infestations and damage are constantly on the increase. As for the common house fly, heavy populations were present throughout the state at one time or another during the fly season. Particularly bothered were dairymen.

Various species of cattle lice were observed through the year and were especially noticeable during the late summer and early fall. The largest and most general infestations were in the southwestern, eastern, and Valley areas of the state.

The sourthen corn rootworm, which caused an estimated $1,000,000 damage to peanuts alone, was also present in practically every field of corn, alfalfa, clover, soybean, and pasture in the Tidewater area. Adult infestations of the meadow spittlebug ranged from light to heavy all over the state, with most in some of the counties in southwestern, west-central, and northern areas.

Spider mite popualtions of varying intensities were present on cereal and forage crops. There was heavy damage to clover in Augusta in early June, to soybeans in Princess Anne in late July, to peanuts and corn in Surry in July and August, and some damage to alfalfa in Rockingham around mid-June. The spider mite also made inroads on the strawberry crop, nipped at tomatoes, beans, gladious, and spinach, and were generally present in the cotton belt.

Not included in the estimated loss figure were the household insects, insects affecting man and animals, and insects in stored products.

The service for detecting and reporting insects in Virginia began last June and weekly reports have been sent out.

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[St]onewall

[St]onewall, Feb. 21.- We hope for [th]ones that have holiday tomorrow, [Geor]ge Washington's birthday, a happy and safe one with no [acci]dents.

[Re]v. W. M. Black, of Pamplin, [prea]ched a wonderful sermon at [...]on Baptist Church on Sunday [even]ing. His daughter, Miss Mary Black brought him here.

[Mr.] and Mrs. Hugh Braford and [child]ren spent the week-end with [their p]arents at Natural Bridge.

[Mr.] and Mrs. George Jennings [and c]hildren, of Kingston, N. C., [spent] the week-end here with his [paren]ts, Mr. and Mrs. Parks Jen[nings].

[Mr.] and Mrs. Vinton Epperly and [...], of Richmond spent the [week-]end with her mother, Mrs. J. [...]eard.

[Mr.] and Mrs. Joe Burnette and [childr]en are keeping house for Mr. [and M]rs. Rufus Burnette, while they [are v]acationing in Florida.

[Mr.] and Mrs. Stuart Barrell and [childr]en, of Staunton spent the [week-]end with her father, Mr. J. O. [...]son and other home folks.

[Mr.] and Mrs. C. D. Carson and [...] L. Chick were shoppers in [Lynch]burg on Saturday morning.

[Mrs.] C. M. Stratton expects to [visit] her daughter, Mrs. Dick [...]s and her family in Mississip[pi] about two weeks. One of Mrs. [...]as' children has been very ill [with p]neumonia. Glad to know the [child] is improving.

[The] folks at Bethel Church were [pleas]ed to have a speaker from [...] Hill Methodist Church, Mr. Drinkard, who made a won[derful] talk, there Sunday morning [...] It was enjoyed by all pre[sent].

[Mr.] Layton Howerton, of Charles[ton, S.] C., spent last Thursday with [Mr. an]d Mrs. Lester Carson.

[Mrs.] C. M. Caldwell had as her [guest] last week her sister, Mrs. Gay [...]n, of Lynchburg.

[Mr.] and Mrs. Lester Carson, Mr. [and M]rs. Henry Beard and son, [...]nce and Mrs. C. D. Carson [went] to see Mr. and Mrs. E. L. [...]n Sunday.

[FO]LLIES OF 1955 [SHO]W IN FARMVILLE

[The] Follies of 1955, a variety [show] consisting of music, dancing, [co]medy skits, will be presented [in Ja]rman Hall, Longwood College, [Farmv]ille, Va., at 8 P. M., on March 2.

[Prod]uced by a New York organi[zation], revue, using local talent, [spo]nsored by the Senior and [Junior] Woman's Clubs of Farmville. [Procee]ds from the performance will [go] to the clubs building fund. [Tick]ets are available from club [memb]ers or may be secured at the [box o]ffice the night of the per[forman]ce.

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FERTILIZER TIPS GIVEN FOR BURLEY PRODUCERS

Too much, or the wrong kind of fertilizer in the plant bed, can spell trouble for the burley tobacco grower.

G. R. Mathews, associate agronomist at VPI Agricultural Extension Service, says many Virginia farmers last year failed to have a good supply of early healthy plants because they either used too much fertilizer, or the wrong kind.

You can't make maximum yields of high quality tobacco if you don't start the crop off early with strong plants of uniform size. If you are late planting the tobacco, you will generally harvest a late, immature crop that will be hard to cure in cool weather.

Here are suggestions for fertilizing burley tobacco plant beds:

Use a 4-9-3 plant bed fertilizer. It has been formulated for plant beds and is low in chlorine.

Don't use too much. Generally one-half to one pound per square yard will be enough. On the lighter, less fertile soils, from one to two pounds may be needed.

Be sure to spread the fertilizer evenly over the bed. You can do this by dividing it in two equal parts and making two applications from different directions.

Work the fertilizer in the soil to a depth of one to two inches. If the soil was treated for weed control, be very careful not to disturb it below two inches.

Remember fertilizer injury to plant beds is more severe in dry weather, so don't let your beds get dry after your tobacco seed starts to germinate.

Don't overlook the fact that diseases and insects can and often do keep you from having good plants.

SPRAYING GRAPES REDUCES DISEASES

Warm winter days are a good time to do a few jobs in the vineyard, says John M. Amos, associate plant pathologist - entomologist at VPI.

He says that pruning out dead and diseased canes and knotty insect-infested wood will do much to improve the vigor of grape vines and reduce disease infection.

All pruning wood, dried-up berries, dead leaves and rubbish should be collected and burned to reduce trouble next year. Sanitation will be a big help, and Amos also suggests the use of a dormant spray of lime-sulfur which will kill fungus spores that may effect the crop next year.

If many scale insects are present, a spray of 3% oil emulsion or miscible oil will be more effective than the lime-sulfur. Use one or the other spray materials, but not both, or injury may result. Oil and lime-sulfur are not compatible spray mixtures.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION CONFERENCES PLANNED

Meetings of interest to electrical equipment manufacturers and suppliers, professional agricultral workers, and others dealing with rural electrification have been scheduled for May.

E. T. Swink, head of the agriculture engineering department at VPI, and chairman of the Virginia Farm Electrification Council, says a conference for farm and home electrical equipmeent manufactures and distributors will be held May 11 in Richmond.

Subscription rate: $2.00 a year; payable in advance.

Retail Pricing Revised In Some Virginia Areas

Milk distributors in many areas are faced with the seeming necessity of revising their method of pricing, reports M. C. Conner, associate agricultural economist at VPI.

He says in areas where store-price differences exist and lower prices for milk in large containers are found, distributors are losing large volume customers on home delivery routes.

To combat this trend, many are adopting some form of quantity discounts, "believed by many specialists of the problem to be a more realistic method of pricing," Conner says. Quantity discount pricing means a lower price per quart to customers who buy several quarts at one time.

Conner explains the basis for this method of pricing as follows: Engineering and cost analysees of milk distribution show the cost of making a delivery to a customer is about the same whether one quart or six quarts are delivered. If it costs 24c to make a delivery (and this may be around the correct figure), the cost for delivery would be 24c for a one-quart customer. But it would cost only 4c per quart for a six-quart customer. On the basis of this calculation, it would cost 20c less per quart to make a delivery to the large customer.

If the retail route is to hold the larger customers, it needs to pass along some of this advantage to them. It has been suggested that there should be as much as 5 to 10c per quart difference between the price of a single quart and a six-quart delivery. All of this difference doesn't necessarily come by lowering the price to the large customer. It may require raising the price to the single-quart customer as well, Conner says.

Areas permitting the free play of economic forces in establishing store differences and of quantity discounts on routes, may find their milk distribution system improving in efficiency. "We could expect single-quart customers to purchase less frequently, or to buy at the store. The result could be an increase in the number of quarts per delivery on the retail routes," Conner believes.

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Is it Ball-Joint Suspension?
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Ford introduced Ball-Joint Front Suspension to the low-price field in 1954. This superior type of su... chassis design in 20 years. And now, ...

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Is it suspended pedals?
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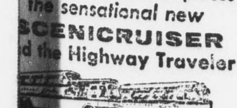
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